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OUR COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM, No. XIV.

THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

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THE subject next touched upon in the Report under consideration, is the Business of the Department. Now, to appreciate this, it may be well to remind the reader that, under the late Secretary, nearly as much business was done as has been done since, and it may be well to cite a few words of the Board's last Report, to show what they think of the matter. They say, "Nearly the whole time of the Secretary is employed in attending Institutes, in visiting the Normal and other Schools, in coöperating with the other agents of the Board, in giving lectures, *in preparing his own Report*, and in a great variety of other indispensable business, which keeps him necessarily absent from the office of his department for a large portion of the year. The Clerk of the Secretary, who is also Assistant Librarian, finds constant employment, during office hours, in attending to persons who call on business relating to the department, and those who come to consult the State Library, so that the preparation of the Annual Abstracts of the School Returns, much of the correspondence of the office, and the care of the printing, must be done at other than office hours. It is difficult to conceive how the great amount of business which now devolves upon, and occupies the whole time of this able and laborious officer, could have been, *as it formerly was*, well and faithfully performed by the unassisted Secretary."

This fact may well astonish the Board, for there is certainly some difference in the two cases. Mr. Mann lectured as often and as effectually as the present Secretary. He attended Institutes, every one, and taught and lectured at them, as much as the present Secretary. He visited the Normal Schools as much; he coöperated with the friends of education if not with "other agents of the Board" as much; he prepared his own Reports, and besides doing "a great variety of other indispensable business" he fought all the battles of the Board, a duty which the present Secretary has not been called on to perform, and, notwithstanding all this, he found time to write two or three large pamphlets, to edit the Common School Journal, and to write and deliver various lectures for Lyceums and similar Institutions, not only in Massachusetts, but in Maine, Rhode Island and New York, for which, as well as for editing the Journal ten years, he was well paid to be sure, but which none the less occupied his time and wasted his strength. Mr. Mann's Reports are as voluminous as the Reports and Abstracts together of the present Secretary, and the Abstracts of Returns published by Mr. Mann form six octavo volumes. It may well astonish the Board, therefore, to find that a Secretary, an Assistant Secretary, two permanent Agents, and four temporary ones, have done no more than the former Secretary did alone. It must also be a subject of astonishment that the present Secretary is so much better paid than his predecessor. When Mr. Mann was appointed, the State allowed him but one thousand dollars in full for all services, travelling expenses, office rent, and clerk hire. The late Mr. Dwight added a thousand dollars to the grant of the State to induce Mr. Mann to take the office, and this gratuity was continued till the State granted fifteen hundred dollars a year, when Mr. Dwight reduced his gratuity to five hundred. The present Secretary is paid a salary of sixteen hundred dollars, and Mr. Dwight, by will, has continued to him the gratuity of five hundred. An office is provided for him, his travelling expenses are paid, an Assistant is allowed at twelve hundred dollars a year, and twenty-five hundred dollars are expended in paying out-door Agents. The Board do not hint that any thing is now done that was not done by the unassisted Secretary, and it will be difficult to see in the State any thing to indicate that such a change has taken place, and such an extraordinary expense been incurred.

We have no wish to institute a comparison between the relative worth of the personal labors of the two Secretaries, but some points in the case are a little singular, and may be mentioned as part of the history of the Common Schools of Massachusetts. It cannot be forgotten that after Mr. Mann published his Seventh

Report, it was attacked by the Thirty-One Grammar Masters of Boston, four of whom wrote a pamphlet in reply to it. The Board and its Secretary were roughly handled, and the most virulent of the four writers and the most unforgiving, was immediately taken into favor by the present Secretary, without any signs of repentance. A Report of the Boston School Committee, written by George B. Emerson, now one of the Board of Education, was so unfavorable to that teacher, who was at the head of the Grammar department of one of the double-headed schools, and so favorable to the other head of the same school, that the former Secretary, as editor of this Journal, compared the said writing master to Mezentius, a living man with a corpse tied to his back. This master, so estimated by the Committee, soon resigned his office, and he was immediately employed by the new Secretary as a teacher at the Institutes, and as soon as an appropriation was made for School Agents, this teacher was appointed at a salary of one thousand dollars a year. The other principal agent was the late popular Speaker of the House of Representatives, whose chief fault was that he was not a practical teacher, but he always frankly said so. There has been a great and serious error in this whole matter. Mr. Mann was not a practical teacher, and his "impracticable theories" were the chief objection made to him by his enemies. The Board ought to have seen this, and when they had it in their power, should have removed this objection by appointing a successor against whom no such objection could be made. Mr. Mann had broken the ground, and his successor should have been not only well acquainted with the history, character and working of our school system, but one acquainted with the art of teaching children; competent to go into the district schools and show the teachers, by actual experiment, how instruction could best be given. The new Secretary, with all his learning and excellence, in other respects, and no one esteems him more highly for this than we do, was nevertheless unacquainted with our common school system, and unused to our common schools. He begins his first Report in accordance with this statement. "It is not without diffidence that I come before you and before the public with this Report. With but little preparation for the duties of my office, and with only a single year's observation and experience, I appear in the place of one whose eminent ability, untiring efforts, fervid eloquence and long period of service have given lustre to the station." He ought not to have risked his well earned reputation in another department of instruction, and thus have caused the Board to wonder at the difference between him and his predecessor. The peculiar circumstances of his appointment show that other motives than the

true interests of the schools, moved the few members who were present at his election, and he should have refused to be the instrument of any sect or party.

If the Board saw fit, however, to appoint another theoretical Secretary, they should have taken care to surround him with assistants, who could do what he could not; but the hostile and ill-reported teacher, just alluded to, was first made the principal teacher at the Institutes, and then a permanent missionary of the Board. The Assistant Secretary was a clergyman, who knew no more than the Secretary about the practical business of teaching common schools; and the other permanent missionary, was a lawyer, who generally began his addresses by disclaiming any acquaintance with the art of teaching as practised in the schools. The only other appointment of importance that has been made by the Board, since the advent of the new Secretary, is that of teacher of the West Newton Normal School, and they appointed one who, until the vacancy occurred, was openly hostile to the whole experiment of Normal Schools. If under these circumstances, the Secretary can say, "It has been quite evident that the speediest and surest way of reaching and moving the hearts of the people on the subject of common schools, is through the living voice of judicious, earnest, and *experienced men, thoroughly acquainted with our institutions for education*, and feeling their inestimable value," we can only wonder, as the Board did, at what we see and hear.

The next subject in the Report is Teachers' Institutes. Of these twelve were held in 1850, each continuing one week. The Secretary thinks that much good was done by them, and we have no doubt of this, although we might differ from him in regard to the way in which it was done, for we are inclined to attribute more to the meeting of the young teachers together, than to the instruction they received. His description of the teachers is somewhat peculiar, and as it probably has reference to ourself, we will give a portion of it. "Prominent among the causes of the increased interest in Institutes, are the means furnished by the Legislature at its last session, of procuring for the conduct of these Institutes a larger amount of aid, and of retaining, without change, able and experienced instructors, who have few superiors in the art of teaching in their respective departments, and who, agreeing in fundamental principles, and being intimately acquainted with each other's methods, not only avoid all collision and controversy, but mutually aid and support each other, and by their hearty and earnest coöperation give both a depth and unity of impression, which are of incalculable importance. A change of instructors would be attended with a great sacrifice, even

though it should bring in others of equal eminence." It is to be regretted that the names of these "able and experienced instructors, to whom teachers of high-schools and academies are anxious to listen" were not given, that the public might judge how nearly the Secretary's description fits them. We have only heard of the one whom we have alluded to, and of one young man and one young woman who have assisted in our Normal Schools. But the names are not given, and we must worship in the dark. The passage above cited, however, is important in many respects, and we shall make it the text of a few remarks.

No Institutes, we venture to say, have ever been more popular, or more useful than those held in Massachusetts under the first Secretary; and the way he managed to make them so must be as great a subject of wonder to the Board as are some of his other doings. The law, previous to 1850, allowed two hundred dollars for each institute, and required each to be holden two weeks. By the new law they are holden but one week, and the sum allowed is two hundred and fifty dollars, that is, half the time, and a fourth more expense! The former Secretary effected this work and made this saving, by employing teachers who were not one idea men, and could teach several branches as well, to say the least, as each has since been separately taught by as many separate teachers, and in this way he avoided most effectually that collision and controversy which are to be feared when several teachers are employed, if they happen to have any character. What is meant by these "able and experienced instructors agreeing in fundamental principles, and being intimately acquainted with each other's methods" needs explanation, since each teacher is devoted to a separate branch; but we once knew a case where the teacher of reading had a series of reading books which he was desirous to introduce to the notice of the members of the Institute, and which they had to buy before the lessons could be given. The teacher of Grammar had made a Grammar book, and used and recommended it in his lessons. The teacher of Arithmetic was also an author, and made his instructions bear upon the sale of his book. Now these teachers agreed in the fundamental principle that each book was the best of its kind, and it was doing a favor to the public to insinuate them into use, and, of course, they coöperated beautifully, and there was no collusion, collision we mean, between the teachers! This, however, could not happen in Massachusetts, and, therefore, we shall be compelled to seek some other bond of harmony!

The Secretary evidently thinks it an object to have one set of teachers at every Institute, year after year, and says, "a change, even for equally eminent instructors, would be a great sacrifice."

Now, the object of these Institutes is, but ought not to be, instruction in any particular branch of study, nor in any particular book, but in the art of teaching. There are several different systems of teaching, and each teacher, even on the same system, will have peculiarities which he considers important. If we understand the Report, the Secretary has found out the best system of instruction, and the best teacher of each branch, on this best system, and he is unwilling to let the young teachers see or hear any other teaching, and judge for themselves. This is the policy that will keep our schools forever where they are; it is the policy that Russia and Austria adopt in politics, and the Romish Church in religion, and it will continue to be the school policy of Massachusetts as long as conservative teachers, who have settled on their lees, and theoreticians, who know nothing of teaching beyond the routine in which they were trained, constitute our Board of Education, or act as its executive agents. We maintain that, in these Institutes, various teachers, even of very different systems, should be employed; that all that is known on the subject of education, may be laid before the young teachers,—it being far less reasonable to expect all the members of an Institute to be able to teach well on any one plan, than to expect them to select the plan best suited to their talents, or such parts of several plans as seem to them most important or best adapted to their circumstances.

The remarks that we have made on the administration of our school system have been drawn from us very reluctantly, for we are aware that our course will excite many weak minds to hostile or unfriendly feelings. Already several connected with the Normal Schools and some old friends of the Board of Education have endeavored to punish us by withdrawing their subscriptions. We should be more disappointed if it were not so,—but we have believed that when the people are once awake to their duty in regard to the Common Schools, justice will be done. At any rate, come what may, we can not but speak the things we think, and believe, and know. In our next, we shall examine the Secretary's notions in regard to Normal Schools.

Now, in thy youth, beseech of Him,
Who giveth, upbraiding not,
That His light in thy heart become not dim,
And His love be unforgot;
And thy God in the darkest of days will be
Greenness, and beauty, and strength to thee.—*Barlon.*

THE PROPER TIME FOR SENDING CHILDREN TO SCHOOL.

We make the following extract from a very valuable lecture, delivered by Dr. Ray, Superintendent of the Butler Hospital for the Insane, before the Rhode Island Institute of Instruction, Oct. 18, 1850. When will such sound wisdom begin to form a part of the New-England system of General Education? We have reserved another extract for a future number. ED.

TIME FOR SENDING CHILDREN TO SCHOOL.

The precise period at which school instruction should begin will vary a little, of course, in different children; but I feel quite safe in saying that it should seldom be until the sixth or seventh year. Not that the mind should be kept in a state of inactivity until this time, for that is impossible. It will necessarily be receiving impressions from the external world, and these will begin the work of stimulating and unfolding its various faculties. Instinctively the young child seeks for knowledge of some kind, and its spontaneous efforts may be safely allowed. With a little management, indeed, they may be made subservient to very important acquisitions. In the same way that it learns the names of its toys and playthings, it may learn the names of its letters, of geometrical figures, and objects of natural history. There can be but little danger of such exercises being carried too far. But the discipline of school, of obliging the tender child to sit upright on an uncomfortable seat, for several hours in the day, and con his lessons from a book, is dangerous both to mind and body. To the latter, because it craves exercise almost incessantly, and suffers pain and distortion from its forced quietude and unnatural postures;—to the former, because it is pleased with transient emotions, and seeks for a variety of impressions calculated to gratify its perceptive faculties. The idea of *study* considered in relation to the infant mind, of appropriating and assimilating the contents of a book, of performing mental processes that require a considerable degree of attention and abstraction, indicates an ignorance of the real constitution of the infant mind that would be simply ridiculous, did it not lead to pain, weariness and disgust.

At the age of six or seven, then, the child may be sent to school, or have its stated tasks. I do not doubt that this period

may be very properly anticipated in some cases, and delayed in others, but practically it will not be found expedient to vary from it much. Children of quick and mature minds may accomplish much before this age, but such minds should be held in check rather than stimulated to exertion, and more dull and sluggish intellects should, for that very reason, begin their training without any further delay.

The amount of work which may be required without impairing the vigor of the mind, will depend on several circumstances,—on the general power of the constitution, the character of the individual mind, the means used for preserving health, and the skill of the teacher in drawing out the different faculties. The limits of this discourse will prevent me from noticing these circumstances with much particularity.

The process of education makes large drafts on the physical powers. Confinement to the benches of a school-room for several hours in the day, accompanied by close application of the mind, is a very different thing from the unrestrained use of the limbs and powers of locomotion, and careless rambling of the attention, so natural to youth. A firm robust child, of a sanguine temperament, will obviously meet the demand on his vital powers, better than the thin, lymphatic, tenderly-nurtured child, whom the winds of heaven have not been allowed to visit too roughly. I fear these physical diversities have not been sufficiently considered by teachers, in regulating the mental discipline of their pupils; for the medical man has frequent occasion to deplore, without being able to remedy, the mischief that arises from inattention to this fact.

During the first few years of childhood,—from six to thirteen,—the character of the mental and physical constitution will determine, for the most part, the amount of mental exercise the teacher may safely require, the other circumstances mentioned in this connection having more influence at a subsequent period. Six hours is the usual length of a school day, summer and winter, for old and young, bright and dull. For the youngest, and for all not favorably organized, this is certainly too long. A feeble child, six years old, not only deprived of its liberty of motion six hours in the day, but subjected to an unwonted toil of mind, is in danger of serious injury, if we know anything of nature's laws, or may be taught by the light of experience. True, the length of the school day does not necessarily determine the exact amount of mental exercise, but the connection is sufficiently close for our present purpose. With the older children, six hours may not be too much, provided their physical health is good. Under the very common practice of giving lessons that must be learned,

if learned at all, out of school, the period of study is lengthened by some additional hours, generally in the evening. Thus the closing hours of the day, instead of being given up to agreeable exercise or pastime, calculated to bring into activity the moral affections that have been dormant the rest of the day, to renew the mental energies and prepare the system for sound and refreshing sleep, are painfully occupied in conning the unwelcome task. Weary and dispirited, the youth goes to his bed in a state of nervous excitement, his brain swarming with images of lines, numbers, quantities, places, and times, which give rise to disagreeable dreams, and impair the restorative effect of sleep. These evening studies are decidedly wrong. If any principle of physiology may be considered as established, it is this, that to insure sound sleep, active mental exercise should be avoided for some time before it is sought.

If mental occupation is desired out of school, it would be better to have it in the shape of reading adapted to the taste and age, whereby another object would be obtained. We should ever bear in mind that education is a means, not an end, and endeavor to impress this truth on the youthful mind. One of the most important of these ends is, to create a love of intellectual pleasures and pursuits; but we might as reasonably expect the penitentiary convict to be charmed with that labor which is imposed upon him as a punishment for crime, and be prepared by it for a future life of honest industry, as to suppose that books, which are associated with the idea of toil and task-work, can ever become a source of rational gratification. If, while plodding along the tedious road of learning, the pupil is allowed, occasionally, by means of judicious reading, to catch a glimpse of its higher ends and rewards, it will sweeten his toil, and impart a new value and significance to the wearisome pages of his school-book. Besides, we must not forget, that where a taste for reading exists, the means for its gratification will be found; and the teacher, especially, must not forget that his text-books will have far less to do with the formation of the man, than those which furnish the recreation of a leisure hour. I am not sure that reading aloud from some instructive and entertaining book might not profitably occupy some portion of school time, for the purpose of exciting a healthy, mental activity, and forestalling a taste for the miserable trash of our time, which is chiefly patronized by the young.

Wit cannot always work; the bow that is never relaxed soon loseth its spring.

THE INFANT'S GRAVE.

WRITTEN BY N. P. WILLIS, AFTER THE DEATH OF AN INFANT DAUGHTER,
HIS FIRST-BORN.

Room, gentle flowers, my child would pass to heaven!
Ye looked not for her yet with your soft eyes,
O, watchful ushers at Death's narrow door!

* * * * *

I have chosen for thy grave, my child,
A bank where I have lain in summer hours,
And thought how little it would seem like death
To sleep amid such loveliness. The brook,
Tripping with laughter down the rocky steps,
That lead us to thy bed, would still trip on,
Breaking the dread hush of the mourner gone.
The birds are never silent that build here,
Trying to sing down the more vocal waters.
The slope is beautiful with moss and flowers;
And, far below, seen under arching leaves,
Glitters the warm sun on the village spire,
Pointing the living after thee. And this
Seems like a comfort, and, replacing now
The flowers that have made room for thee, I go
To whisper the same peace to her who lies
Robbed of her child, and lonely. 'Tis the work
Of many a dark hour, and of many a prayer,
To bring a heart back from an infant gone!
Hope must give o'er, and busy fancy blot
Its images from all the silent rooms,
And every sight and sound familiar to her
Undo its sweetest link; and, so, at last,
The fountain that, once loosed, must flow forever,
Will hide and waste in silence. When the smile
Steals to her pallid lip again, and spring
Wakens its buds above thee, we will come,
And, standing by the music-haunted grave,
Look on each other cheerfully, and say,
A child that we have loved is gone to heaven,
And by this gate of flowers she passed away.

While over life's wide darkling plain,
Unheedingly we roam,
Through many a path of joy and pain,
God leads His children home.
And though sometimes in prospect viewed,
The winding way seems dark and rude;
Ah! who the backward scene hath scanned,
But blessed his Father's guiding hand.— *Bowdler.*

THE CURSE OF THE COMMON SCHOOL.

MR. EDITOR : — We hear much about the necessity of having good rulers, and have heard much on this subject for fifty years ; at least by fits and starts,—quadriennial convulsions. Our institutions, we are told, or our lives are in danger ; the tug of war has come ; to arms ! to arms ! Let us carry our point this once, and the country and all else are safe.

Now, I am not disposed to make light of the subject of electioneering for an American President, nor of sounding an alarm in regard to political or national dangers ; but I have one lesson to enforce, as being fairly deducible from the facts in the case. If, in the progress of a dozen of these political revivals, these quadriennial national spasms, nothing has been gained ;—if the people, the *real rulers* of the country, remain as they were, ignorant and unprincipled ; if among the millions of our children at least one or two of these millions cannot read for themselves the Constitution of the country under which they live ; and if this mass of ignorance is daily increasing,—then, I ask, how are we to be the dupes of this would-be-called patriotism ? And is it not high time for every friend of his country to turn his face towards our families and public schools, and to say, “ Here are the rulers of our country ; here are our future rulers, our future President and Legislators ; and here, daily and hourly, instead of once in four years, let us, as good citizens, as patriots, philanthropists, and christians, concentrate our efforts.”

But here, Mr. Editor, precisely at this point, lies our danger. Those who ought to take the lead in this great work of education, will not do it. You speak of the *curse* which hangs over a *certain class* of our countrymen, but which they, and they themselves only can remove. I am glad to have you speak out, even if your opinion should not be fully responded to by me and others. Your columns are open, most fortunately, to free discussion.

I have said that those who ought to take the lead in the work of christian electioneering,—I mean, of course, the right instruction and education of the rising generation of our country,—will not do it. By this I do not mean that they are ready to acknowledge any such unwillingness ; for it is possible they are not conscious of its existence. But this does not alter the plain matter of fact.

The truth is, that we are all laboring under a great curse ; perhaps I ought to say that what I allude to is, emphatically, *the* curse of this country. As regards a name for it, I am not with-

out my difficulties. If it must be named, however, since names seem desirable, I would call it Protestant Popery, or at the risk of being thought paradoxical, American Romanism. We are closely wedded to certain *forms*. These forms must be maintained, so we seem to suppose, at all hazards. As for the substance, if we let this slip, we can procure an *indulgence* for it. This adherence to the things that be, and the power and facility of purchasing absolution from sins committed, I say again, is the *curse* of this country, if not of the age in which we live.

I love, nay, almost venerate Luther and his cotemporaries. They did a great and needful work ;—or rather they *began* a good work. They cast off the outward forms of Popery,—but it was the outward forms only. The internal or spiritual part was not so easily got rid of. Most unhappily, it will require a mightier than Luther to complete the work which Luther began.

Some there have been, ever since the days of Luther, who have possessed a measure of the same spirit. John Robinson, in his farewell address to our pilgrim fathers, seems to have manifested it when he said,—“I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the reformed churches, who are come to a period in their religion, and will go, at present, no further than the instruments of their reformation. Luther and Calvin were great and shining lights, in their times, yet they penetrated not into the whole counsel of God.” But such men as Luther and Robinson are now, alas, few and far between.

From the days of John Robinson, to go back no further, to the present time, “dominion” has been passing from the few to the many ; and from the days of Pestalozzi and Raikes and Wilderspin, it has been going over from the adult to the youth, the child and the infant. If the pew in the church and the bench in the school-room have not actually been elevated, they have, at least, been so by comparison ; since the pulpit and teacher’s desk have descended a little way to meet them, just as the heavens have descended, under the gospel dispensation, to meet the earth. And this has been so in spite of all the efforts which, as Protestant Papists, some of us have made to prevent it. It was the spirit of the age, and could not be wholly resisted. It was the spirit of christianity which is essentially republican, against which the very gates of hell can never wholly prevail. Some little progress, I say, has been made.

But, as I have already intimated, this descent of heaven to meet earth, that earth itself may be elevated—this christian organization—has been opposed by the *few*, and by that portion of the *many* who have followed in their worship of the forms and things that be. They have supposed, no doubt sincerely, it was

downright heresy. They suppose so still. The pulpit must be kept up, sounding board and all, even though the sounds it utters should be in an unknown tongue, or, overshooting the heads of those below, should "waste their sweetness on the" morally "desert air." The teacher's desk must also be high perched between earth and heaven; and the elevation and distance of both must be maintained. The decree of Heaven that power must pass over from priest and pedagogue, and pulpit and desk to the pew and the school-room, from the few to the many, went forth, alas! a little too soon. Mankind, we are told, are not ready for it!

However, God's ways are wiser than our ways, and His thoughts wiser than our thoughts. If men will not take the foremost seat in the Redeemer's chariot, and direct its course, they must be dragged at its wheels. If they will not elevate by enlightening the public mind—if they will not, in the spirit of true Protestantism, go on with what Luther and Calvin and Robinson—and the Lord Jesus Christ—have begun, then it were but to suffer under a righteous penalty, that they should submit to the consequences. Justice will not, ought not, always to sleep, or even to linger.

The Protestant Papist makes a thousand excuses, I know, for his neglect to come up to the work of removing the curse under which we live. He has "bought five yoke of oxen," or "a piece of land," or "married a wife," and therefore he *cannot come*.

The education of the young in families and schools, though a christian duty, an eternal duty, a duty which cannot be neglected, except at our peril—he "*cannot attend to it*." His thoughts and time, and money, are all pre-engaged, pre-occupied. So he says, and so, for aught I know, he believes. He dares not take Roman ground on this subject, in his words; but he does much worse than this, for while he admits the true Protestant doctrine in theory, he denies it practically.

These American Romanists value the *public* school. Its praises they are constantly singing, at least when anybody else introduces the subject. But if you inquire for proofs of their affection, these are chiefly found in the fact that they send their children to the school they praise so much, (when they have no apology for keeping them at home,) furnish them with books, at least one book of each sort to a family, and, occasionally, attend the quarterly examination, when this does not occur on the same day with that of the Academy or Normal School! As for ever showing their heads in the public school, during its progress, when, by their countenance and support, they can alone do the school much good—it is almost as rare as the appearance of a comet. They

have no time,—they have other and pressing engagements, or perhaps, there are examinations of greater importance!

Nor does the conversation of the family at the table, or elsewhere, or the fervor of family devotion, often approach this subject, so highly estimated! The fashions of the day, the rise and fall of stocks, the percentage on money loaned, the last marriage and the next to come, or the next candidate for the presidential chair,—for these and many more, by way of condiment to the principal dish, they have time in abundance.

They will tell you, perhaps—when hard pressed—that the public school is of little value, a sort of public nuisance, and they take no pleasure in visiting it. Why, then, do they send their children there? “Because they can not afford to send them elsewhere, at least, until they are a little older.” And yet they will repeat their convictions that the school is of little value except as a school of vice. Why not make it better? “This would require a liberal private subscription or contribution; and for this they have not the pecuniary means.” Besides, they are hoping the Normal School will, ere long, come to their aid,—forgetting or not knowing that the Normal School can do nothing effectual, till the public mind is duly prepared for it. No man loves the Normal School, who despises the Common School.

They have not the pecuniary means of employing better teachers, they tell us. Yet they have the means of sending half or three-fourths, or the whole, of a numerous family out of town to school, for several years, at an extra expense of more, much more than enough to make the public school at their doors, quite as good as the more distant private school which they have substituted for it.

Some have money enough to build churches, with rival steeples almost sky-high, as well as to give away for this and various other good purposes when they come to die. They have money enough to build or at least to hire a palace for a dwelling house, and to furnish it in princely style. They have the means of living on a scale equal to that of Solomon at Jerusalem, and of keeping up appearances almost equal to his. They have the means of dressing in the most costly manner, in the latest Parisian style, and of having everything else truly à la mode, down to the tie of a shoe, the style of a finger ring, or the shape and movements of a pretty hand or foot,—one, however, which must not be soiled or used as long as somebody else can be employed at a dollar a day, as a substitute, or a coach and six be procured by others' money. In short, they have both time and money enough to enable them to transfer God's holy workmanship into dandies or monkies, and yet have no time to reïnstall His image on the children He has

given them, and required them to train in the way they should go, either at home or at the school house. For what are home and school? plain home and the public school, I mean, compared with pretty houses and pretty places, and pretty carriages and pretty dresses, and pretty feet and hands!

But I must stop, Mr. Editor, not because my subject is exhausted, or my picture over drawn, for I have not yet half filled up the outline, but for other and perhaps better reasons. I hope, however, I have prepared the way for those who may, better than I, go a little more into detail, and show, more particularly, where the curse of American Romanism hangs; that it is, in truth, *the curse of curses*; that Rome around us is as nothing at all to Rome in our own bosoms.

Yours,

SENEC.

A CURTAIN LECTURE.

Are you asleep, Mr. Caudle? O dreadfully sound, I guess.— *I have a right to guess?* I guess I have, and you shall hear what I have to say, if you are dead.— *Go on?* well so I will go on, when I'm ready. I'll tell you what, Mr. Caudle, our Clara Jane Rebecca shall not go to the public school any longer.— *Shan't she?* No, shan't she. Mrs. Smith says it is not genteel, and she sends her daughters to the Academy.— *Can't afford it?* Yes you can, if you choose to; but you don't care what becomes of Clara Jane Rebecca, poor, dear child! I don't know what she'd do if she had n't a mother.— *Do without one?* Don't kill me, Caudle, it is bad enough to die by inches as I do, every day. *More lives than a cat?* You wretch, I'll live to spite you. But poor Clara Jane Rebecca will never survive the mortification of going to a public school, when her companions are all going to the Academy. Are you asleep or awake, Caudle?— *Yes?* yes what? Hear me, Caudle. If Clara Jane Rebecca does not go to the Academy, I'll torment you to death.— *You will if she does go?* What do you mean by that, Caudle? Thus you always reward me for my care of the poor orphan that will be, when I am gone, and her bear of a father can do as he pleases. I went to an Academy a whole quarter, and— *Apt scholar?* what do you mean, Caudle?— *Nothing?* yes you do mean something. You mean that the Academy ruined me, that's what you mean, you monster, when you know that all you are or ever

expect to be, you owe to my management. — *Mismanagement?* Don't drive me mad, Caudle, don't drive me mad! — *No need of driving?* *Mad already am I?* Well, they say it takes more than a fool to make a madman. But Clara Jane Rebecca shall never go to the public school again. — *Settled then?* I guess it is. *What's the matter with the public school?* Matter enough. No decent people send there. — *Better all send and make it decent?* If all send, it can't be decent. Well, snore away, but only listen. — *Can't do both?* Hear me! Clara Jane Rebecca shall never put her head inside of that public school again. — *So I said before?* Well, so I say again. She shall not go. *Must pay whether she goes or not?* No must about it. I won't pay one cent to save the school from perdition. — *Must pay, no escape?* What! pay when I don't send! I'll die first. — *Cheaper to pay?* No justice in it. I will die first. — *Higher law, hey?* I wish I had the hiring, I guess I'd make an Academy of every public school in less than no time. — *What you are trying to do?* What do you mean Caudle? You are trying to bolster up the Common Schools. Do you deny that? — *No.* Then how do you propose to make an Academy of the public school? — *By sending all the children to it?* What will you do with the Academy then? — *Call the School an Academy, and place the Principal over the public school?* Well, Caudle, for once in your life you seem to have a rational plan in your head. Bless me, where's my night-cap? — *You have got it on by mistake?* That accounts for your being so bright, Caudle. Now go to sleep for I am tired of hearing you talk.

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